



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 31, 2006

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*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

First Steps Announces Schedule for 4K Expansion Pilot Meetings

Columbia, S.C. – S.C. First Steps to School Readiness announced today the schedule for upcoming informational meetings on the state’s 4-year-old kindergarten (4K) expansion pilot. Private child care providers interested in participating in the program are strongly encouraged to attend one of the following meetings:

- **Thursday, August 3, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – Florence County Public Library, 509 S. Dargan St., Florence
- **Thursday, August 3, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** – Brandi’s Banquet Hall, 503 Lockemy Hwy., Dillon
- **Monday, August 7, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – Nix Educational Center, 770 Stilton Rd., Orangeburg
- **Tuesday, August 8, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – YMCA Community Room, 410 Anderson Dr., Laurens
- **Tuesday, August 8, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – Harrison People’s Health Care Center, AHEC Conference Room, 1000 West Pine St., Varnville
- **Wednesday, August 9, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** – Peebles Auditorium, 3rd Floor, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), 2600 Bull St., Columbia

Any additional meetings will be announced at a future date.

S.C. First Steps is currently accepting applications from eligible private child care providers that can serve income-eligible children residing in the state’s school funding suit trial and plaintiff districts. Since the pilot program allows parents to choose centers across district and county lines, eligible providers need not be located within a trial plaintiff district.

To become an approved center, private for-profit, private non-profit, faith-based, Head Start and other non-school district settings may apply if they meet the following qualifications:

- be licensed, registered OR approved by the SC Department of Social Services;
- use an approved, research-based curriculum;
- offer 180, 6.5-hour instructional days per year; and
- employ a teacher who has at least a two-year degree in early childhood education and is working toward a four-year teacher education degree.

S.C. First Steps has also set up an informational webpage (www.scfirststeps.org/4K.htm) that allows providers to request updates and download an application to become an approved center.

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South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed. Public and private support is combined through county partnerships to enable individual communities to address the unmet needs of young children and their families.